

REMARKS

Upon entry of this response, claims 1-16 are pending in the instant application, of which claims 1, 2 and 16 are independent. Claims 1 and 11-16 are canceled herein. Claim 2 has been amended. Support for the amendment can be found throughout the Specification and at least at paragraphs [0011], [0024] and [0025] and Figure 1. Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims define over prior art.

I. Interview with the Examiner

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy of conducting a telephone interview on November 9, 2009. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that the claims could be amended to further specify the structure of the “gripping means”. The Examiner indicated that amending claim 2 to define that *the gripping means have protruding engagement members that are configured to grip at recesses of the half-mandrel* would likely be patentable over the Hahnel reference. Accordingly, the Applicant amends claim 2 as discussed during the interview. Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims define over the cited references and hence, are in condition for allowance.

II. Objections to Claims

Claim 2 is objected to because of informalities. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that the limitation “and said fixing means and a unit comprising said corresponding half-mandrel” should be separated by a semi-colon such as “and said fixing means; and a unit comprising said corresponding half-mandrel”.

Applicant amends claim 2 to recite “and said fixing means, such that a unit comprising said corresponding half-mandrel”. Applicant believes that the amendment addresses the Examiner’s concerns. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the objection to claim 2.

III. Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 2-8 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0011842 by Hahnel et al. (hereinafter “Hahnel”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Applicants amend claim 2 to further define the gripping means in light of the Examiner’s remarks on page 5 of the Office Action. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that claim 2 does not call for *gripping means to grip the half-mandrel*. See Office Action, page 5, § 6. Accordingly, Applicants amend claim 2 to more specifically define the gripping means in view of paragraphs [0024]-[0025] of the present application. Applicant respectfully submits that Hahnel does not disclose *at least two gripping means, each gripping means including one or more protruding engagement members configured to grip at recesses of one half-mandrel corresponding to said at least one bearing cap, while the other half-mandrel is movable with respect to the gripping means*, as recited in Applicant’s amended claim 2.

Hahnel discusses a clamping and supporting fixture 8 having a stationary lower workpiece mount 10 as well as a workpiece counter mount 14 for advancing via a slide 12 at right angles to the mounting axis A, and having a bearing cap support 16. See [0031]. Hence, in Hahnel, the workpiece 12 is fixed. The Examiner asserts that portions of the counterpiece 14 are equivalent to the gripping means and that they are couplable to the half-mandrel 18. See Office Action, page 2, § 3. However, in Hahnel, portions of the counterpiece 14 identified by the Examiner do not include one or more protruding engagement members that are configured to grip the recesses of the half-mandrel. In contrast, according to Applicant’s amended claim 2, the gripping means includes protruding members that actually grip at one of the half-mandrels by engaging at the recesses of the half-mandrel.

In addition, Figure 1 of Hahnel clearly indicates a contact between the cross-section of bearing caps 4 and the corresponding cross-sections of the half-mandrel 18 by illustrating the contact with a bore 6. However, such a bore is not provided between the cross-sections of the counter mount 14 and the remaining portions of the half-mandrel. Thus, it is not clear whether in Hahnel the counter mount 14 even contacts portions of the half-mandrel 18 that may be interpreted as being equivalent to recesses. As such, it is not possible for Hahnel to disclose *at*

least two gripping means, each gripping means including one or more protruding engagement members configured to grip at recesses of one half-mandrel corresponding to said at least one bearing cap, while the other half-mandrel is movable with respect to the gripping means, as recited in Applicant's amended claim 2.

Claims 3-8 and 10 depend from claim 2 and, as such, incorporate all of the features of claim 2. Therefore, claims 3-8 and 10 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 2. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 2-8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

IV. Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hahnel in view of any of U.S. Patent No. 6,457,621 by Hahnel et al. (hereinafter "Hahnel II"), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0023939 by Hase (hereinafter "Hase") or U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0104864 by Knoll et al. (hereinafter "Knoll"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 9 depends from claim 2 and, as such, incorporates all of the features of claim 2. Applicant respectfully submits that any combination of Hahnel, Hahnel II, Hase and Knoll fails to teach or suggest all of the features of claim 9. For example, the combination of Hahnel, Hahnel II, Hase and Knoll does not teach or suggest *at least two gripping means, each gripping means including one or more protruding engagement members configured to grip at recesses of one half-mandrel corresponding to said at least one bearing cap, while the other half-mandrel is movable with respect to the gripping means*, as recited in claim 2.

In light of the arguments presented above, Hahnel does not teach or suggest the above features of claim 2. Hahnel II, Hase and Knoll are cited to provide teachings for the feature added in claim 9. However, Hahnel II, Hase and Knoll fail at curing the shortcomings of Hahnel with respect to these features because none of Hahnel II, Hase and Knoll, taken either alone or in any reasonable combination, teach or suggest *at least two gripping means, each gripping means including one or more protruding engagement members configured to grip at recesses of one*

half-mandrel corresponding to said at least one bearing cap, while the other half-mandrel is movable with respect to the gripping means, as recited in Applicant's amended claim 2.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

CONCLUSION

In view of the above comments, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance and urges the Examiner to pass the claims to allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a teleconference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicant's attorney at (617) 227-7400.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. HEU-003USRCE. In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith, and the requisite petition does not accompany this response, the undersigned hereby petitions under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely. Any fee due is authorized to be charged to the aforementioned Deposit Account.

Dated: November 10, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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